

beggars!" said Mrs. Dorival, scarcely able, through emotion, to articulate.

"No, madam. Till I knew of your existence I considered this inheritance mine," said Edward, "but I view it so no longer; and to convince you of my sincerity, to express to you the happiness which it yields me to exchange a fortune which I could not enjoy, for the friendship and affection of relatives whom I now for the first time address, I thus destroy the evidence of a bequest, which justice alone would compel me to surrender,—and with my gentle cousin's permission, this too shall share the same fate," and as he spoke, he quietly took from the astonished girl the paper which almost unconsciously she had continued to hold, and joining it with the duplicate in his possession, tore both to fragments, which fell like a tiny shower upon the floor.

Madeline, from the moment of Beaufort's entrance, had recognized in him the young man whom she had seen at Mrs. Dunmore's, and whose interesting appearance, and earnest observation of herself, had more than once, since that time, recurred not unpleasantly to her remembrance, and it caused her indeed a joyful surprise, when Doctor Moreland presented this individual as her near relative, and one who came voluntarily, and on that plea, to claim their friendship. Yet deep shame at the manner in which her mother received him, quickly subdued her pleasurable sensations, and she was on the point of entreating her forbearance, when the disinterested act of Beaufort arrested her every thought, and with involuntary eagerness, laying her trembling hand upon his arm, as he deliberately destroyed the legal evidence which entitled him to a splendid fortune,—

"No, no," she breathlessly exclaimed, "do not this injustice to yourself—it is yours rightfully—legally—pray forbear to complete an act which you cannot fail to repent."

"The heart, unless sadly perverted, seldom repents what the voice of conscience approves, as I am sure my sweet cousin knows from her own experience," said Beaufort, letting fall the last shred of paper, and looking with a smile upon her,—and such a smile,—so full of gentle and benignant kindness, as had never beamed on poor Madeline before.

"God bless you, sir," said Mrs. Dorival, scarcely able, yet, to believe the evidence of her vision. "You are not more like one, long loved and lost to me, in person, than in soul, and as you have made the hearts of his widow and orphan to sing for joy, so may Heaven's best and richest blessings descend and rest upon you."

She sank back overpowered by her emotions and sobbing with such hysterical violence, that Madeline in alarm hastened towards her.

"Take her away, my dear," said the Doctor. "This scene is too much for her,—she wants rest

and quiet; give her a draught of valerian, and if she can settle into a sound sleep, she will wake up calm and refreshed. Go," seeing Madeline look inquiringly towards the bed, "your grandfather will need no more of your care, and I will stay with him till you return."

Assisted by Beaufort, who begged Mrs. Dorival to lean for support upon him, Madeline led her mother back to her own room, and, following the Doctor's directions, restrained her from giving audible vent to her over-excited feelings, but sitting down beside her, took a book, and though unobtrusive even of its title, affected to be entirely absorbed by its contents, till she saw her sink, at last, to sleep. Then gently stealing from her side, she was returning to her grandfather, when in the apartment through which she was about to pass, she encountered Beaufort, waiting to speak with her before his departure.

"But one word," he said, as taking her hand in his, he bent earnestly towards her, "one word, and I am gone; gone, to bring hither, and I wait but to obtain your leave, a dear sister, who longs to greet you with a sister's love, and win yours in return. She has been my only one till now—but now, I feel that I have found another, who, I humbly hope, will admit me to a brother's place in her confidence and regard."

"Ah! can you doubt it?" she said with fervour; "you, whose disinterested generosity has already laid us under such a weight of obligation, and won from us our warmest gratitude and love!"

"Do not speak of this," he said quickly; "I would not feel that I have purchased your kind and friendly feelings by a simple act of justice; let me strive to win your affectionate regard by other means; and so solicitous, am I to obtain it, that you will shortly discover your praise for disinterestedness is but ill bestowed."

"It shall be, and it is yours already," said Madeline, "and your sister's too; I long indeed to know her, and prove myself worthy of her love. Oh!" she continued, with sweet enthusiasm, "what a new life has this hour unfolded to me. It is so exquisite to feel that there are beings bound to us by the near ties of consanguinity, who take an interest in our welfare, and are ready to lend us kind counsel, and gentle sympathy in all our needs. Forgive me, Mr. Beaufort," she said, wiping the fast falling tears from her lovely April face; "I have lived so long alone, companionless as it were, for mamma's frequent illnesses have cast me from childhood on my own poor resources, and left me to feed much on my unshared thoughts, that I am overpowered by this sudden accession of dear friends. I scarcely dreamed that in the wide world, there existed a being who could regard my welfare or happiness as worthy of a passing thought!"

"So young, and yet so desolate," sighed Edward